

READING THE PAST

SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
ENGLISH HANDWRITING

Facsimilies, transcripts & reading notes

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READING NOTES

14-19

INTRODUCTION

This book offers an introduction to, and practice in, reading and transcribing sixteenth and seventeenth-century documents in English. The examples chosen have been selected to offer experience in a wide range of sources, including those, such as wills and parish records, which family and local historians are most likely to use, and to provide examples of a variety of hands, from those of court officials to those of private individuals. The documents have been arranged in an approximate order of difficulty (although this will vary from person to person), and the reading notes given for each example at the back of the booklet provide a guide for those wishing to start with a particular type of document. All the documents featured are held by the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, University of York, and are published with permission.



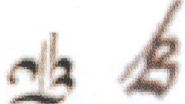



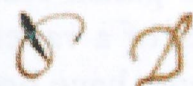

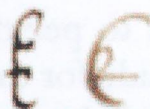






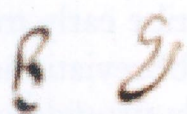
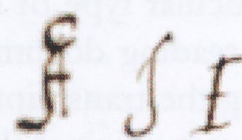




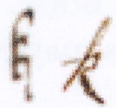




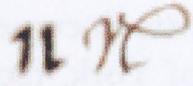







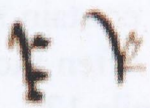

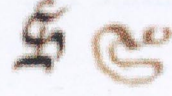
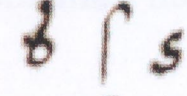

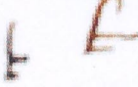










TRANSCRIBING THE DOCUMENTS

Learning to read and transcribe early-modern documents in English involves learning about some specific features, such as abbreviations and different ways of forming letters, but also a lot of practice. This book can only provide one or two examples of any particular type of handwriting or document but these do demonstrate most of the difficulties with reading documents at this date. The arrangement in this book, with a plate of each example facing the transcript, allows the user both to try to read or transcribe the document on their own without looking at the transcript provided, and to check their own work against a full transcript as they go, so that letters and words which are proving difficult can be identified and checked. Extra hints are given in the reading notes at the back of the book. Those readers who wish to have the notes beside them as they work through the facsimiles may photocopy the reading notes.

Early modern documents differ from those written today in their letter forms, their use of abbreviations, their spelling and punctuation. Spelling in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was both often different to modern spelling and not standardized. Words were thought of as sounds rather than written forms and one word could be spelt in more than one way within a single document. Many words are written phonetically, particularly in private documents (see for example the letter from the parishioners of Liverton to the archbishop of York, facsimile 8) so that sometimes a confusing word can be understood if it is read aloud. These differences of spelling mean that it is important to note the word down exactly as it is spelt: sometimes what appears to be one word will turn out to be something different altogether, or a word which appears to be nonsense at first will make sense later on. Sometimes a word which is clear on the page still seems to have no meaning – it may be that it is no longer used or that it is a dialect word, in which case the full Oxford English Dictionary or a dialect dictionary will often provide a meaning. Be aware also that even a document apparently all in English may contain some words in a different language: documents issued by the church courts for example often included Latin phrases (see for example John Clitheroe's fine for his wife's behaviour, facsimile 12).

COMMON LETTER FORMS

Letter forms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be very different to those of today and could vary within a document: it is not unusual, for example, to find two types of s in use, one being found mainly at the ends of words. The following alphabet offers some examples of typical letter forms from the examples in this booklet: the specific problem letters in each document are highlighted in the relevant reading notes at the back of the volume.

A		a	
B		b	
C		c	
D		d	
E		e	
F		f	
G		g	
H		h	
I		i	
J		j	
K		k	
L		l	
M		m	
N		n	
O		o	
P		p	
Q		q	
R		r	
S		s	
T		t	
U		u	
V		v	
W		w	
X		x	
Y		y	

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

A number of the examples in this booklet use abbreviated words or parts of words. This system of contracting words is based upon the abbreviations found in medieval documents. Some are still familiar today in a slightly different form – the practice of abbreviating “and” to “&” derives from the earlier abbreviations for the same word, some of which are met in these documents. These abbreviations can seem very difficult to remember at first, but become easier to identify with practice. Examples of the most common abbreviations, taken from the documents in this booklet, are given below: again, the reading notes draw attention to specific problems in each example.

the		pre	
that		per or par	
et (and)		pro	
with		ner	
item		our	
William		ment	
		acion	

PUNCTUATION

The use of punctuation in the sixteenth seventeenth centuries varied greatly from modern practice, both in its positioning (many documents of this date contain none at all) and in the symbols it uses. For further information see G.E. Dawson & L. Kennedy-Skipton, *Elizabethan Handwriting 1500-1650* (London, 1966) and L.C. Hector, *The Handwriting of English Documents* (2nd ed, London, 1966).

EDITORIAL METHOD

All transcripts reproduce exactly the capitalization and spelling of the original document, in the same line lengths. Letters added to complete abbreviations are in square brackets [i]. Where words have been crossed through these are reproduced crossed through in the transcript. Words which are interlined (that is written above the main line of writing) are included in angled lines \ / . u and v have been adopted in the transcripts in their modern forms for ease of understanding. Dialect or unfamiliar words are explained, where possible, in a footnote. Brief Latin phrases occurring in the documents have been included, with translations given in footnotes.

Marriages.

Abberford.

Marriages.

The names and surnames of all such
persons as have been married wth in the said parish.

Anno dñi 1540.

Nulla Nuptia.

Anno dñi 1541.

June.

13 Richard Huthmson and Alne Newed.

July.

24 Thomas Howdell and Alne
September.

18 Samuell Harrison and Elizabeth Sampson.
November.

6 Thomas Jackson and Jane ffearby.

January.

22 Willm Stamper and Agnes ffetgerston.

ffebuary.

28 John Gibson and Mundane Canwood.

Anno dñi 1542.

November.

5 Thomas Marshall & Elizabeth Sampson.

Anno dñi 1543.

May.

28 Robert Sugler and Jane Taylor.

July.

15 Robert Goleevan and Elizabeth

November.

11 Willm Gower and Agnes

Anno dñi 1544.

January.

17 Peter Gower and Elizabeth

Anno dñi 1545.

Nulla Nuptia.

Anno dñi 1546.

May.

9 Edward Gower and Agnes Howdell.
November.

7 John Gibson and Elizabeth Harrison.
January.

16 John Hudson and Agnes Skafe.

Anno dñi 1547.

June.

7 Richard Canwood and Isabell Hault.

July.

31 Thomas Daniell and Isabell Darwin.
November.

22 Edward Skargill & Alne Simpson.

24 Leonard Lockwood & Elizabeth Chamman.
January.

24 John . and Margret Lockwood.

26 Robert Hudson and Jennet Howdell.

Anno dñi 1548.

July.

29 Richard Willmson and Jennet Roster.

November.

4 Henry Webster & Jennet Winkering.

15 John Heptonstall & Isabell Howdell.

16 Willm Carter & Margret Spouter.

Anno dñi 1549.

July.

28 Edward Gower & Elizabeth Buntfoot.

November.

24 Willm Milner and Jennet Buntfoot.

Marriages in Aberford parish (1540-1549)
(PR ABE 1 fo. 26)

Many registers begin in 1558 as a result of Elizabeth I's order of 1597 to copy up baptisms, marriages and burials 'in a fair parchment book'. Many interpreted this as an excuse to copy up only from 1558, not 1538 when registration began. The Aberford register reproduced here is one of these retrospective copies on parchment. A possible explanation for the several missing surnames could be the clerk's inability to read the handwriting of the previous register. The arrangement of parish registers varies. Here the baptisms, marriages and burials are separated in distinct parts of the register. Other places adopted a strict chronological ordering, recording each even as it took place, taking no account of the type of event but only its date.

Mariages.	Abberford	Mariages.
The names and surnames of all such persons as have been married w[i]thin the said parish		
Anno d[omi]ni 1540		Anno d[omi]ni 1546.
Nullae Nuptiae ¹		May
Anno d[omi]ni 1541.		9 Edward Sawer and Agnes Howdell
June		November
13 Richard Hutchinson and Alice Newes		7 John Gibson and Elizabeth Harrison
July		January
24 Thomas Howdell and Alice		16 John Hudson and Agnes Skafe
September		Anno d[omi]ni 1547.
18 Lancelot Harrison and Elizabeth Rawson		June
November		7 Richard Cawood and Isabell Harle
6 Thomas Jackson and Jane Fearby		July
January		31 Thomas Daniell and Isabell Wawin
22 William Stamper and Agnes Fetherston		November
February		22 Edward Skargill and Alice Simpson
28 John Gibson and Mundane Cawood		24 Leonard Lockwood and Elizabeth Cham...
Anno d[omi]ni 1542.		January
November		24 John and Margret Lockwood
5 Thomas Marshall and Elizabeth Sampson		26 Robert Hudson and Jennet Howdell
Anno d[omi]ni 1543.		Anno d[omi]ni 1548.
May		July
28 Robert Ingle and Jane Taylor		29 Richard Will[ia]mson and Jennet Foster
July		November
15 Robert Sotheran and Elizabeth		4 Henry Webster and Jennet Pickering
November		15 John Heptonstall and Isabell Howdell
11 William Sawer and Agnes		16 Will[ia]m Carter and Margret Sponer
Anno d[omi]ni 1544.		Anno d[omi]ni 1549.
January		July
17 Peter Sawer and Elizabeth		28 Edward Hewet and Elizabeth Baitter\ a/m
Anno d[omi]ni 1545.		November
Nullae Nuptiae ¹		24 Will[ia]m Milner and Jennet Briant

¹ No marriages

In the name of God Amen the Twentieth daie of August in the year of our
One thousand Six hundred forty & three I Elizabeth Beaumont of shesf.
in the county of yorke with being sick in body but of good & perfect memorie (I
praise god for the same) doe ordaine & make this my present last will & testament
in maner & forme following first & principally I commend my soule to god
my Creator hoping by his meritt & the meritt of xpi Jesus my Redeemer
to have my sinnes forgiven & my soule saved, and my body to the earth And for
such worldly substance as the Lord in his meritt hath bestowed on mee my
mind & will is halber disposed of as followeth first I will that my debts &
mortuaries & fundall charges shall be paid out of my whole goodes Item I give
and bequeath unto my sonne John Bates the cheife in the nooke end in the house
the bedd with the furniture & apperrell all the said beddesyde in the three parlor.
the lead in the kitchen & the steeple fall in the wall house Item I give to Henry
Dreton my sonne in lawe Ten shillings and to Jonathan Dreton & Elizabeth
Dreton his two children either of them Ten shillings Item I give to Mary
wife of Thomas Badger Ten shillings and to John Bates & Hellen Bates
my grand children either of them Twenty shillings Item I give & bequeath to
my two brethren Anthony Howsley & Robert Howsley either of them Twenty
shillings Item I give unto Elizabeth Drippet my god daughter & to Thomas
Drippet her brother either of them Ten shillings and to John Greene
my godson Twelve pence All the rest of my goodes & chattels not before
revised given or disposed of I give devise & bequeath unto my sonne Anthony
Bates whom I make & appoint the sole & only Executor of this my last will and
testament desiring him to see the same truly executed & performed And I desire
my very loving friend Willm Tawson of wallto be supervisor hereof and to
ayde my Executor with his best advice & counsell And I give unto him for a
token of remembrance Ten shillings In testimony whereof I have hereunto
set my hand & seal: and declared this to be my last will, in presence of
Willm Tawson. John Tawson & Wwallsworth. ^{inrat}

Subscr Elizabeth Beaumont.

Elizabeth Beaumont's Will (1643)

(Exchequer court will, Doncaster Deanery September 1644)

Until January 1858, nearly all wills had to be proved in the Church Courts, most of them in the courts of the bishops or archbishops. Original wills, like Elizabeth Beaumont's will here, were exhibited in the courts and copies were also transcribed into the probate registers. Note the interlining of "iurat" (Latin for "he has sworn") towards the end of the document, by the name of the executor, and the names of William Rawson and William Wordsworth, the witnesses. These were added when the will was proved and indicate that these men have sworn the necessary oath to administer Elizabeth's goods as laid down in her will.

In the name of God Amen the Two and Twentieth daie of August in the year of o[ur] Lord One Thousand Six Hundreth Forty and Three I Elizabeth Beaumont of Sheffeld in the county of york wid[ow] beeing sick in body but of good and p[er]fect memorie (I praise god for the same) doe ordeine and make this my p[re]sent last will and testam[en]t in man[er] and forme folowing First and principally I comend my soule to god my Creator hoping by his mercies and the merittes of [Chris]t Jesus my Redeemer to have my sinnes p[ar]doned and my soule saved, and my body to the earth And for such worldly substance as the Lord in his mercy hath bestowed on mee my minde and will is shalbee disposed of as foloweth First I will that my debtes mortuary and fun[er]all charges shalbee paid out of my whole goodes Item I give and bequeath unto my sonne John Bate the chist in the nooke end in the house the bedd w[i]th the furniture and a preser att the said beddesyde in the Over parlor, the Lead in the kitchen and the steepefatt in the Malthouse Item I give to Henry Treeton my sonne in lawe Tenn shillinges and to Jonathan Treeton and Elizabeth Treeton his Two children either of them Tenn shillinges Item I give to Mary wife of Thomas Badger Tenn shillinges and to John Bate and Hellen Bate my grandchildren either of them Twenty shillinges It[e]m I give and bequeath to my Two brethren Anthony Howsley and Robert Howsley either of them Twenty shillinges It[e]m I give unto Elizabeth Trippett my goddaughter and to Thomas Trippett her brother either of them Tenn shillinges and to John Greene my godsonne Twelve pence All the Rest of my goodes and chattels not before devised given or disposed of I give devise and bequeath unto my sonne Anthony Bate \iurat/ whom I make and appoint the sole and only Executo\r/ of this my last will and testam[en]t desireing him to see the same truly executed and p[er]formed And I desire my very loving frend Will[ia]m Rawson \iurat/ of walkley to bee sup[er]visor herof and to ayde my Executor w[i]th his best advice and Councell And I give unto him for a token of Remembrance Tenn shillinges In testimony wherof I have herunto sett my hand and seale and declared this to bee my last will, In p[re]sence of Will[ia]m Rawson. \iurat/ John Rawson and W[illia]m Wadsworth. \iurat/ Subscr[ibed] Elizabeth Beaumont

21.º Offobrid 1699.

21^o March 1699.

A Declaration enjoyned to be Done by
Robert Drummond of A. Clerk Maister of the
Hen: Watkinson Dioces of Yorkie.

The said Robert Dinwiddie shall be sent in the
witness - house of Bishopthorpe upon Monday y^e 30th
day of October ^{between 11 hours of fore & three in y^e afternoon} instant when and where in the presence of
Mr. Adams sent vicar of Bishopthorpe of course
Mr. Joseph Danish and two others to be brought
by the said Mr. Danish he shall declare as followeth

I HEREBY I Robert Dimmock doo stand forth in the
 Ecclesiastical Court at Youke for saying that Mrs. Giffen
 sent to Mr. Joseph Daniel with Child and that the
 said Mr. Daniel had got her with Child on the Green = Bed
 at Bishopthorpe and had given her money to pay it upon
 his own Word and Sentence - I doo here acknowledge and
 declare that I have no grounds or reason to speak
 any such words and doo desire that Mr. Daniel may be
 not wrong thought off by reason of any words shewed
 to be spoken by me -

These may certify if Robert Dimmore did attend at
ye vicarage-house of B^{thorp} he is to certify under the hand
on munday y^e 30th of this Inst. & till y^e hour of 3
in y^e afternoon, & m^r Da-
niell not appearing, y^e s^d
Rob^t Dimmore did in obedi-
-ence to y^e orde of y^e
Court make a Declara-
-con according to y^e tenor
of these presents, before me,
& 3 o^r witnesses.

Th. Emerson
Johannis Lubens

witness my hand
Thos. Adam minister of B.H. 1

Robert Dinmore Performs Public Penance (1699)

(V.1698/misc papers)

Penance was assigned to particular individuals, usually by the Church Courts or the bishop's or archdeacon's visitation court, in declarations such as this. After the reformation, the guilty person had to stand in the parish church, or in this case in the vicarage house, in public, with bare head, legs and feet, dressed in a white sheet and carrying a wand, and to confess his fault and express penitence. A certificate stating that the penance had been performed had to be sent to the bishop's office by the minister: in this case the certificate has been written on the foot of the declaration.

21^o Octobris 1699

Hen[ry] Watkinson A Declarac[i]on enjoyned to be done by
Robert Dinmore of Acaster Malbis of the
Dioces of Yorke.

The said Robert Dinmore shall be p[re]sent in the
vicarage-house of Bishopthorpe upon Monday the 30th
day of Octob[er] instant \between the hours of one and three in the afternoon/ when and where in
the p[re]sence of

Mr Adams p[re]sent vicar of Bishopthorpe aforesaid
Mr Joseph Daniel and two others to be brought
by the s[ai]d Mr Daniel he shall declare as followeth
(v[idelice]t)

Whereas I Robert Dinmore doe stand convict in the
Ecclesiastical Court at Yorke for saying that Bess Lowther
servant to Mr Joseph Daniel was with Child and that the
said Mr Daniel had gott her with Child on the Green-Bed
at Bishopthorpe and had given her money to lay it upon
his man Ned Carter - I doe here acknowledge and
declare that I had noe grounds or reason to speake
any such words and doe desire that Mr Daniel may bee
noe worse thought off by reason of any words proved
to be spoken by me.

These may certify th[at] Ro-
bert Dinmore did attend att
the vicarage-house of B[isho]p[thor]p
on Munday the 30th of this
inst[an]t [Octo]b[er] till the hour of 3
in the afternoon [and] Mr Da-
niell not appearing, the s[ai]d
Rob[er]t Dinmore did in obedi-
ence to the ord[e]r of the court make a Declara-
c[i]on according to the tenor
of these pr[e]sents before me
[and] 3 oth[er] witnesses
witness my hand
Tho[mas] Adam minist[er] of B[isho]p[thor]p

And of the p[er]formance hereof
he is to Certifie under the hand
of the s[ai]d Mr Adams at the
Consistory Office at Yorke on or
before the First day of
November next together with
these pr[e]sents

Tho[mas] Empson
Notarius Pub[li]cus

The presentments of Christopher Bell & William
Metcalf chappell-wardens of y^e chappell of Sowby
for y^e year 1678

Imprimis We present Peter Darby & 3 Papists
Dorothy his wife & Ann Bist

Item we present Peter Dail: quaker
Christ: Bell
W^m Metcalf

Item we present Matthew Morley of
Susans Bell of Sowby
Thinks for not giving an account
of their marriage & for refusing to
show a certificate by whom, where or
when they were married

The presentments of Tho: Banks
curate

Imprimis I present William Metcalf for
not paying his dues to y^e church curate
of Sowby

Item I present Susanna Bell now wife to
Matthew Morley who was then wite in
the chappell of Sowby for not observing
y^e fast day appointed by y^e kings proclamation
but using servile work in y^e time of divine
service

Tho: Banks curate

The Churchwardens and Curate of Sowerby present the wrong-doers of their chapelry
(1678)
(YV/ChP 1677/8)

Presentments, statements made on oath, were made by churchwardens and clergy of a parish during a bishop's or archdeacon's visitation. Members of the parish who had broken the Church's laws were brought to the attention of the visitation courts. Those found guilty would have been prescribed public penances (see p.3) which in some cases they were allowed to commute for a cash payment. If such penances were not carried out the guilty parties were excommunicated.

	The pr[e]sentments of Christopher Bell [and] William Metcalf chappel-wardens of the chappell of Sowerby for the year 1678.	
Imprimis	we pr[e]sent Peter Darley [and] Dorothy his wife [and] Anne Best	Papists.
Item	we pr[e]sent Peter Dail: quaker	
		Christo[pher] Bell W[illia]m Metcalfe
Ite[m]	we p[re]sent Matthew Morley of Thirsk \[and] Susane Bell of Sowerby/ for not giving an account of their marriage [and] for refusing to shew a certificate by whom, where or when they were married	
The pr[e]sentments of Tho[mas] Bankes curate		
Imprimis	I pr[e]sent William Metcalf for not paying his dues to the church curate of Sowerby	
Ite[m]	I pr[e]sent Susanna Bell now wife to Matthew Morley who was then with in the Chappelry of Sowerby for not observing the fast day appointed by the kings p[ro]clama[ci]on but using servile work in the time of divine service.	
	Tho[mas] Bankes Curate	

On yuarto arlo Ex Dicit hat about xij years
since he his Dependent Being in the house
of the said Lord Winton father to the said
mrs Agnes and one of his chamber did see
the said Agnes' mistress wrap at sundry
times in torments And at one time
amonged others his Dependent asked her what
she wept and she said to tell him she
would show her father And for she
said my friends would shame me to marry
in Curwen and it is but a wasted young
man And I write may not fynde in my
sort to marry him And at Sydo's house
since she ⁱⁿ said she say that she
would now shame him Et alio modo
Dependa

Agnes Musgrave's distress over her forthcoming marriage (1556)

(CP G609)

This is part of a court case, heard in the church courts between Nicholas Fairfax, knight, on the one part and Henry Curwen and his wife Maria and Agnes Musgrave, alias Wharton, wife of Richard Fairfax, knight, deceased, upon the other. Nicholas had declared Agnes to have been married to Henry Curwen before her marriage to Richard Fairfax, which would have made both her marriage to Richard and the marriage of Henry and Maria invalid. The defendants proved in the courts that their marriages were both valid, and Nicholas was ordered to pay their expenses in the case.

Cases in the Church Courts were largely dependent on the evidence of witnesses and this document is part of the evidence of one of these, whose name does not survive in the records. The extract includes two Latin phrases. It begins "Super quarto articulo examinatus dicit" "Concerning the fourth article the witness says". The complaints of the defendant in each case were laid out in numbered points known as articles, and witnesses were asked to comment upon each article as it was read to them. The articles for this case do not survive, so we cannot know exactly what this witness was being questioned about. The passage ends, as did the reply of each witness to each article "et aliter nescit deponere" that is "and he knows nothing else to say in testimony".

Super quarto ar[ticu]llo Ex[aminat[us] dicit¹ that about xvi yeres
sence he this deponent Beinge in the howse
of the said Lord wharton father to the saide
M[ist]res Agnes and one of his chamber did see
the said Agnes musgrave wepe at sundrye
tymes in corners / And at one tyme
Emonges others this deponent axed hir ~~where~~ \whie/
she wepte and she said to tell him she
wold shewe hir father / And then she
said my frendes wold have me to mary
Mr Curwen and he is But a crased yonge
man[n] And I ~~maike~~ may not fynde in my
herte to mary him / And at dyv[er]s tymes
sence he haith harde hir say that she
wold nev[er] have him Et al[ite]r nescit
depon[er]e.²

¹ Concerning the fourth article the examinant says

² And he knows nothing else to say in testimony

Annot of the Yorolio value of the Portone of Malton in
the Countie of York

The same doth consist of these particular of fitt & benefitt ensowing
first of tithes rorne of old malton in yorolio value s — 5th
Item the tithes of hay in yorolio value s — 2th
Item the tithes of lambs in yorolio value s — 2th
Item the Easter booke yorolio s — 2th
Item the tithes of pigge & hennes s — 2th
Item the tithes of the witnes a farne, wth the s — 2th
tithes of New malton milnes. s — 2th
Item the tithes of rorne & hay of wickham, a vilage s — 2th
or gamlott of the pise s — 2th
Item tithes of hemp, apples, myons, &c s — 2th
Suma totalis s — 21th

Deduct for the yorolio rent to the B. Archbishop s — 2th
and for the poor ministers salaries s — 2th
so remains so clare s — 2th

The rent of 200th above said of written Euro doth pay yorolio
to the Ward. mypoll for some few yores to come, of the remnant
of an old lease, over & besides the rent to the Archbishop, & the
ministers wages of — 2th.
note that there is neither p^{er}sonage house, tithes barns, or barns stead
nor any gleabe land.

The church of Old Malton lists its annual income (1611)
(Ter. L. Old Malton 1611)

When bishops undertook visitations of the parishes within their dioceses (in theory every three years, but in practice less often) each parish was obliged to provide an inventory (listing the movable goods belonging to the church) and a terrier detailing the church’s income from its immovable goods: that is, the tithes and rents it obtained from its land and buildings: indeed, the lands and buildings usually made up the bulk of these terriers (the note at the end of this document stating that here is no glebe makes this an unusual return). These terriers often survive in diocesan archives.

Notice particularly the use of “li” with an abbreviation sign to stand for pounds. This stands in fact for “libri”, the Latin for pounds, and can be used for either money or weight.

A note of the yerelie value of the Rectorie of Malton in
the Countie of Yorke

The same doth consist of these p[ar]ticuler p[ro]fitt[es] and benefitt[es] ensewing

First of tithe corne of old malton in yerelie value	Lx ^{li}
It[e]m the tieth hay in yerelie value	xij ^{li}
It[e]m the tieth woll and Lambe in yerelie value	x ^{li}
It[e]m the Easter booke yerelie	v ^{li}
It[e]m the tieth pigg[es] and hennes	xl s
It[e]m the tieth of the withes a farme, w[i]th the tieth of New malton milnes	L s
It[e]m the tieth Corne and hay of wickham, a village or hamlett of the p[ar]ish	xij ^{li}
It[em] tieth hemp, aples, unyons etc	x s
Sum[m]a totalis ¹	Ciiij ^{li}
Deduct for the yerelie rent to the L[ord] Archbishop	xvj ^{li}
and for the poore ministers salarie	ix ^{li}
so remaines de claro ²	lxxx ^{li}

W[I]ch rent of Lxxx^{li} abovesaid S[i]r will[iam] Eure doth pay yerelie
to S[i]r mar[meduke] Wyvell for some few yeres to come of the remnant
of an old Lease, over and besides the rent to the Archbishop and the
ministers wages of ix^{li}.
note that their is neither p[ar]sonage house, tieth barne or barne stead
nor any gleabe land.

¹ sum total
² clear [after all payments are made]

Apr^e 14th 1684

These are to certifie whom they may concern y^e Office
Harrison being desirous to undertake y^e Office of a Midwife
& heretofore having practised wth good successe we who
have experienced her skill & dexterity & examined her
judg^{mt} hope y^e for y^e future she may be usefull & (und^r god)
an instrum^t for good amongst us. Therefore we (her
neighboury in y^e parish of Beeford) humbly desire she
may have Licence und^r y^e Seal of y^e Office to practise
as Midwife amongst us & her adjacent Neighboury & to
this y^e humble request (in her behalf) we have sett our
hands y^e day & year above written

Eliz: Johnson
Margaret Robson M^r her m^k
Elizab: Ford D^r her m^k
Ellin Hodgson H^r her m^k
Mary Brown & her m^k
Ann Browne
Mary Booth
Habbell Harrison O^r her m^k
Jane Nailor & her m^k
Jane Jaiteson

Alice Harrison is nominated as a midwife (1684)

(Nom. M. 1682/2)

To practise as a midwife, schoolmaster or surgeon required a licence. To get such a licence the applicant had to prove both that they were competent (as this nomination attests) and that they conformed to the beliefs of the Church of England.

Notice the number of women signing by mark: that they did not write, however, did not imply that they would not have been able to read.

Apr[il] the 14th 1684

These are to certifie whom they may concern th[at] Alice Harrison being desirous to und[er]take the Office of a Mid-wife and heretofore having practised w[ith] good successe we who have experienced her skill and dexterity and examined her judgm[en]t hope th[at] for the future she may be usefull and (und[er] god) an instrum[en]t for good amongst us. Therefore we (her neighbours in the parish of Beeford) humbly desire she may have Licence und[er] the seal of the Office to practise as Mid-wife amongst us and her adjacent Neighbours and to this o[ur] humble request (in her behalf) we have sett our hands the day and year above written

Eliz[abeth] Iohnson
Margarett Robson her m[a]rk
Elizabeth Ford her m[a]rk
Ellin Hodgson her m[a]rk
Mary Brown her m[a]rk
Ann Browne
Mary Booth
Isabell Harrison her m[a]rk
Jane Nailor her m[a]rk
Jane Taiteson

Lincolnton

D Bishop

Wee parishioners of Lincolnton all of us which
goe to the Church wee desirous by make our
petition to you, and would desire you to make
us helpe in this matter, for the Church
Government of this Church of ours at Lincolnton
can, be proved an antient Church for fifty
years ago: and hath ^{had} Divine service in London
hill curie in Norfolk. Lotted the great Lands and
tyoth neare upon the bay of, fifty poundes
in the year tis being hard if wee can not
have Divine service every Saboth Day but it
doth very well appear that wee have been very sore
neglected, for wee have wanted Divine service for
four or five Saboths all to gether but noe marvell
if wee lack Divine service for in Norfolk South
Throston vt. to pull down our Church besides
that he is a ~~restless~~ man among us in saying
of Isot for he will neither pay to the King
nor to the poore with out Compulsion
for want of know ledge in this matter wee desire
your helpe and soe leave you to the protection
of your maker soe wee rest your servants

To Com, mands

This is given Under all our hands with in
the parish of Lincolnton

The Parishioners of Liverton complain of neglect (1698)

(Bp C & P I/13)

This is the first letter of complaint sent by the parishioners of Liverton to the archbishop and is undated. The second complaint, dated 4 October 1698, was followed apparently by a letter to the vicar from the archbishop, to which James Lowde replied, on 14 October 1698, claiming that the parishioners did indeed have a sermon and prayers every Sunday. On 17 October a petition was sent by the parishioners of Easington, stating that Liverton had never been better served and that Mr Neville, the curate, was a man of “sober life and conversation”. The lack of any surviving additional correspondence on the subject may indicate that the archbishop considered the matter closed.

Liverton

L[or]d Bishop

Wee parisheners of Liverton all of us which
doe goe to the Church wee doe heireby make oure
Petison to you, and woulde desier youe to make
us helpe in this matter, for the Church
goforment sake this Church of oures at Liverton
Can be proved an anchsent Church for fifty
yeares ago: and hath \had/ devine searves Mr Lowde and
his Curit Mr nefell Lettes the gleab Lande and
tyeth neare upon the valley of, fifty poundes
In the yeare tis veiry harde if wee Can not
have deivine searvis every Sabeth day but it
douth very well aserre¹ that wee have been vere sore
neglected, for wee have wanted divine searvis for
four or five Sabethes all to gether but noe marvell
if wee Lack devine searvis for Mr Nefell douth
Threaten us to pull downen our Church be sides
that he is a Refractres² man among us in paying
of seses³ for he will neither pay to the king
nor to the poore with out Compullshon
for want of knowledge in this matter we disire
your helpe and soe Leafe you to the protxson
of youre maker soe wee Rist your searvents

To Com,mande

This is given under \all/ our handes with in
the parish of Liverton

¹ asert, avow

² refractious

³ taxes

The Inventory of all the good and rare movable and immovable
of Thomas Etherington late of great Shiffes deceased,
Indifferently viewed by George Etherington son William
Etherington son Nicholas Hawland and George Egan
the xxijth day of September 1589.

In primis in his purse ———— v^s t^r
It in his coffers ———— s^t
It his sword dagger and girdle with other furniture } v^s s^d
for the body
It all his apparel ———— v^s t^r

In the hall.

In primis two tables with framed the fourmed two raised } iij^t
one being with glass windows, with other furniture
It two coats of plate with spears and other furniture } s^t
belonging for eight horsemen.
It a longe bow his quiver a shaft of arrowes and a stone bow — iij^s v^s s^d
It a caliver with the furniture thereto belonging. — v^s s^d
It brandons tongs bellows and other fiery instruments — v^s s^d

In the kitchen

In primis a paire of gallowsbancks with hokes kilped two } v^s s^d
paire of tongs an Iron shovell with other fiery furniture
It brass pottle and possette ———— s^t v^s s^d
It ransons and fiddles ———— v^s s^d iij^t
It some varke coppernails dooping pane for nags pannes } v^s s^d
with other furniture

In the warehouse.

In primis two leade a dwile fat a } iij^t
massat three rollers with other
furniture

The late Thomas Etherington's goods are recorded (1590)

(Precentorship Wills Jan 1589/90)

This is part of the inventory of the goods of Thomas Etherington, recently deceased. Inventories of a person's belongings were drawn up after their death by their executors (or the administrators of their goods if there was no will) as part of the process of dividing up these belongings. Such inventories principally survive in the main Exchequer and Prerogative Courts of York between and c. 1680 and c. 1750, but survive earlier and later in many of the other, peculiar courts. Thomas Etherington's land and belongings had all been within the jurisdiction of the precentorship and his will was therefore proved in the precentorship court.

The Inventory of all the good[es] and cattall[es] moueable and unmoveable
of Thomas Etherington Laite of great Driffeld deceased
Indifferently praysed by George Etherington sen[ior] will[ia]m
Etherington sen[ior] Nycholas Harland and George Gillan
the xxvijth day of September 1589.

In primis in his purse	v li
It[em] in his Coffers	C li
It[em] his sworde dagger and girdle with other furniture for the body	xl s
It[em] all his Apparrell	x li

In the halle

In primis two tables with fraimes thre fourmes two chaires one bynch with glasse windowes with other Implement[es]	iiij li
It[em] two coates of plate w[i]th speres and other furniture therto belonginge for light horsemen	v li
It[em] a longe bowe his quiver a shafe of arrowes and a stone bow	iiij li vj s viij d.
It[em] a Callever ¹ with the furniture therto bellonginge	xxvj s
It[em] brandirons tonges bellows and other fiery Instrument[es]	xl s

In the kitchinge

In primis a paire of gallowbawkes ² w[i]th hookes kilpes ³ two paire of tonges an Iron shovell w[i]th other fiery Implem[en]t[es]	xxx s
It[em] brasse pott[es] and posnett[es] ⁴	v li vj s
It[em] cawdrons and kettles	xxv s vj d
It[em] spitt[es] Rack[es] copyrons ⁵ dreaping pan[es] fryinge pannes with other Implement[es]	xli v s

In the Brewhouse

In primis two lead[es] a gwile fat ⁶ a masfat ⁷ thre coolers with other Implement[es]	iiij li
---	---------

¹ a light musket

³ handles of pots or cauldrons

⁵ cob irons, the irons upon which a spit turns

⁷ a mashing vat

² iron bar in a chimney from which hooks for pots are hung

⁴ small, metal, three footed pots for boiling

⁶ a vat in which wort ferments

To the most reverend father in Christ Sir John by God's
providence Archbishop of York primate of England and
metropolitan & officer his g. associate in the said commission.

Umblly complinginge I cometh unto your grace your poor orator the
churchwardens and officers the parish of Borton Pidsley the Widdeshurst
of your g. diocese of York, that where there is a great store of people
in Widdeshurst aforesaid desirous to be instructed and taught the
true & saved god and man; and where the said vicar having the
care of their souls and bodies to feed them with good words:
So it is most reverend that the said vicar not regarding the
his said charge, nor tending the souls of his flock, at
Easter last past departed away and forsake his said cure
wandering and travailing a bread in place unknown being
a notorious and known papist and a great misleader of the
good religion and publicly revealed, and therefore as it late
was confessed to one that met him by chance in London where he
said he was travelling toward Flanders, saying he had
some relief amongst the papists of those parts, and saying the
promises he would come at his said vicarage. And further
if it like your grace the said vicar at his departure left in
his place one Thomas Moore clerk a man of great disorder
and bad behaviour causing much strife and contention amongst
the people, and giving evil example of life by his daily and
intolerable drinking and frequenting of ale houses and other
vicious places, & beside that giving no regard to his duty
the said cure. And also he saw by the very manifest work
of and many times to amend his life, notwithstanding
in his evil more and more to the danger of his soul and
great shame of the church. May it therefore please your grace
and said associate to provide for the said cure, and to call
before you the said vicar. So: may be answered to say as he
shall be contented against him touching the promises touching
his duty and justice. And this in the name of God.

The parishioners of Burton Pidsey complain of desertion (1577 x 1588)

(HC CP nd/3)

This petition to the High Commission court at York requests the replacement of the vicar of Burton Pidsea, a papist who fled to Flanders, and his substitute, apparently a drunkard. Ecclesiastical commissions were established under Queen Elizabeth for the northern and southern provinces, and at diocesan level. Unlike the ordinary ecclesiastical courts the northern and southern province courts were formerly independent, and the northern court had a close relationship with the activities of the Council in the North. The provincial court at York heard many cases (including cases involving recusants, and sometimes dealing with as many as 60 hearings in a day) from its establishment in 1561 until 1641. The cases have produced a great detail of documentation – indeed, the York records are easily the most extensive of any of the ecclesiastical commissions.

To the most reverende father in Christe Edwine by goddes
providence Archbushoppe of yorke primate of Englande and
metropolitane and others his g[race's] associat[es] in the hie co[m]mission

Humbly compleyning sheweth unto your grace your poore oratours the
churchwardons and others the p[ar]ishners of Burton Pidsey al[ia]s Piddesburton
of your g[race's] diocese of yorke, that where there is a greate flocke of people
in Piddesburton aforesaid desirous to bee enstructed and taught their
duties toward[es] god and man: ~~and where~~ the said vicar havinge the
cure of their soules and bounde to feede them w[i]th goddes worde:
So it is (most reverende) that the said vicar not regardinge ~~th~~
his said charge, nor tendeing the souls helth of his flocke, at
Easter last paste departed awaie and forsooke his said cure sithens¹
wandringe and traveylinge a broade in plac[es] unknowen / beinge
a notorious and knowen papiste and a greate misliker of the
godlie religion nowe publicquely receaved and therfore (as of late
hee confessed to one that met him by chaunce in London waie) he
said he was traveylinge toward[es] Flanders, hoping belike to
have relief amungest the papist[es] of those parties / and sithens the
premisses he never came at his said vicaredge, / And further
if it like your grace the said vicar at his departure left in
his place one Thomas Moore clerke a man of greate disorder
and evell behaviour occasioninge much strife and contention amongst
the people and gevinge evell example of lief by his dailey and
intollerable drinkinge and frequentinge of ale houses and other
unmeete places, and besids that gevinge no regarde howe he discharged
the said cure / And albeit he have [^]\bene/ by ~~the~~ us charitably exhorted
oft and manie times to amende his lief, nev[er]theles he p[er]sisteth
in his evils more and more to the daunger of his soule and
greate Feare of others. May it therfore please your grace
and said associat[es] to provide for the said cure, and to call
before you the said Tho[mas] Moore to answeare to such ar[tic]les as
shalbe objected against him touchinge the premisses accordinge
to equitie and Justice, And this in the waie of charitie.

¹ since then

3

Item the doct^r proponed and an^{sw}ered that he said Jamos
 Dowllon not having the feare of god before his eyes
 neither regarding the mutuall love w^{ch} ought to be
 betwixt man and wife hath durt and sundry tymes
 since the said marriage and w^{ch} in the one two three
 four five sixe and seaven yeres last past hath will
 intreated the said Elizabeth his wife in very univill
 fashion and one tyme the said Elizabeth being w^{ch} w^{ch}
 begott by him and being twenty weekes gone on he aboute
 one evening he came unto her being overcomen w^{ch} durt
 at it stained and furiously beat her and w^{ch} w^{ch} violence
 unto her that he caused her to ^{perillously to faile} labour and to be dolind
 of her ~~child~~ ^{great} danger of her life the great
 perill of his owne soule and will examp^{le} of othert and
 the doct^r an^{sw}ered as before.

4

Item the doct^r proponed and an^{sw}ered that about a yere or two
 after the said Elizabeth lying in child bodd being
 dolind of her second child he the said Jamos came
 in, univillly and put his hand into the bodd where the
 lay and nipped her and did bruse her body in such violent
 sort that she turned fo^r he the of the great wife and
 other wives standing by, and thereupon the great wife
 did reprehend him fo^r it and said unto him as wife
 of the said come in to her pretending kindness and dost
 thou do her after this manner w^{ch} plait of
 her body so nipped by he the said Jamos was blacke
 blew for a long tyme aft^r. And the doct^r an^{sw}ered as before.
 Item the doct^r proponed and an^{sw}ered that aft^r the birth of
 her third child the said Jamos Dowllon in one of
 his drunken fitts did exbrauly beat & violently
 handle the said Elizabeth his wife. And the said
 her child in her arms go w^{ch} violence pulled it
 from her and cast it upon the ground w^{ch} such
 force that he brake the palle of the said child to
 the great danger of his owne soule & will examp^{le}
 of othert, And the doct^r an^{sw}ered as before.

Elizabeth Cowlton complains of ill-treatment (1624)

(HC CP 1624/3)

The excerpt below is from the articles of a case heard in the Church Courts in which Elizabeth Cowlton complains of her ill treatment at the hands of her husband, James. There are no further surviving details of this case, but such complaints were common in cases where the wife sought “separation of bed and board”: the nearest to a divorce allowed at this time. Such cases were usually heard in the Church Courts until the divorce act of 1842.

- 3 It[e]m she doth propound and ar[tic]le That the said James Cowlton not haveing the feare of god before his eyes nether regarding the mutuall love w[i]ch ought to be betwixt man and wife hath div[er]s and sundry tymes since ther said marraige and w[i]thin the one two three fower five sixe and seaven \8, 9/ years last past hath evill intreated the said Elizabeth his wife in very uncivill fashion and one tyme the said Elizabeth being w[i]th child begott by him amd being twenty week[es] gone or therabout[es] one evening he came unto her being overcome w[i]th drinke as it seamed and furiously beat her and used such violence unto her that he caused her \presently to fall into/ ~~to~~ laboure and to be deliv[er]ed of her child \long before her tyme/ to the great danger of her life, the great p[er]ell of his owne soule and evill example of others. And she doth ar[tic]le as before.
- 4 It[e]m she doth p[ro]pound and ar[tic]le that about a yeare or two after, she the said Elizabeth lyeing in child bedd being deliv[er]ed of her second Child he the said James came in, uncivilly and put his hand into the bedd where she lay and nipped her and did bruse here body in such violent sort that she cryed for helpe of the grace wife¹ and other wifes standing by, and therupon the grace wife did reprehend him for it and said unto him ah theife doest thou come in to her pretending kindness and dost thou use her after this manner, w[hi]ch places of her body so nipped by the said James was blacke and blew for a long tyme aft[e]r. And she doth ar[tic]le as before.
- 5 It[e]m she doth propound and ar[tic]l[e] that aft[e]r the birth of her third child the said James Cowlton in one of his drunken fitt[es] did extreamly beat and violently hayle the said Elizabeth his wife. And she haveing her child in her Armes he w[i]th violence pulled it from her and cast it upon the ground w[i]th such force that he broke the backe of the said child, to the great danger of his owne soule and evill example of others, And she doth ar[tic]le as before.

¹ midwife

Affirm d'nomm contra q' Ege is affirmed
 Margarita C'litico sopra } to appear Her day
 p' C'litico de n'lt' Obor } and it is ordered that

for the offence in which my
 the reverend as the same shall
 adwaind sonlets can be informed and
 frequent the request as by the reason
 bonade Christo due respect to the

Ceterum de morte et ad hunc solennem in
 quatuor septimana. Et deinde de
 literis de hoc et solennem magnis in
 Edwardus fuit et solennem de hoc de hoc de hoc

The in Court In quia Summam Drms may be
 awarded meruit and it was decreed that
 the Defendant should be for the same
 costs awarded to the Plaintiff
 and the said Court of Chancery
 afterwards the said Plaintiff entered a motion
 and the Court was divided for no advantage
 being taken against him by the Defendant

Wrote a letter against the new offer of money
to have a man of trust and to be a full

John Clitherow is fined for his wife's behaviour (1578)

(HC AB 9 fo. 165)

This was the fourth of 65 cases heard by the eleven High Commissioners sitting on 6 October 1578, beginning between 9 and 11 o'clock. The first Monday after St Andrew's day in 1578 was Monday 1 December, giving John Clitherow 56 days to find the considerable sum of 30 shillings. A skilled craftsman, such as a master mason, was paid at the rate of 6d a day in York at this period. Margaret Clitherow was martyred in 1586 (see p.13).

Offic[iu]m d[omi]norum contra
Margareta[m] Clithero uxore[m]
Joh[ann]is Clithero de ci[vita]te Ebor¹

She is assigned
to appeare this day
and yt is ordered that
hir husband shall pay
for hir offence in refusing
the church etc as the courte shall
award unles she be reformed and
frequent the church \in the meane season/ as by Law she is
bounde ²Quo die co[m]p[arui]t Joh[ann]es
clithero et monit[us] est ad comparend[um]
post meridie[m] et ad tunc solvend[um] ij s
p[ro] qualibet septimana Et deinde d[i]c[t]us
Clithero co[m]p[arui]t et solvit manibus m[agist]ri
Edwardi Fawcet suma[m] \xxx s/ ~~xl~~s pro delict[um] uxoris
sue in hunc die qua[m] sumam d[i]c[t]us mag[iste]r
Fawcet recepit² and yt was decreed that
Mr Archdeacon colton should se the same
xxx s destributed to the pore of the parish
³et h[ab]e[a]t ad cer[tifican]d[um] Lune post Andree³ And
afterward[es] the said clithero entred a new bond
and thereupon yt was decreed that no advantage
should be taken against him for his other bond[es]

¹ This section translates as: Office of the judges against Margaret Clitherow, wife of John Clitherow of the City of York.

²⁻² This section translates as follows: On which day John Clitherow appeared [before the court] and was ordered to appear in the afternoon, and then to pay 2 shillings for each week. And afterwards the said Clitherow appeared on that day and paid into the hands of Master Edward Fawcett the sum of 30 shillings for his wife's neglect of duty, which sum the said Master Fawcett received.

³⁻³ This section translates as: And he has until the Monday after the feast of [Saint] Andrew to certify [that he has done as the court ordered].

The condition of this obligation is such that if Maryaret
 Clerkess wife of John the above bounden do Clerkess now
 prisoner in the castle of York and appointed to remain
 with her said husband until the first day of July next
 next coming do yield herself prisoner again in the said
 castle of York the said first day of July next, and
 there continue and abide. From prisoner in state as before
 religion and so publicly received with this realm of
 England, and do promise and undertake to the said realm of
 to her grace Henry or other what and allowed place of
 common prayer and there quietly abide and obediently hear
 dedyme sermons and sermons. It also in the meane season
 she do not converse nor take with any disobedient person
 or person in matters of religion. To confirm her in
 that enormous opinion she now holds, neither sermons
 and now confirmable from her dutifulness and obedience
 towards religion now established with this realm of England
 — This her obligation to be made and of none effect or ill
 to stand and be in full force and virtue

John Clerkess

1

n

Sealed and delivered
 in our presence
 and with our seal

Henry brother
 Richard mother



John Clitherow is bound for his wife's good behaviour (1584)
(HC Bond 101)

Bonds, of which this is an excerpt, such as this one adopt a standard format (or diplomatic) whatever their purpose. They can be found, for example to guarantee the repayment of a loan, to guarantee that a marriage to be performed is legal in all senses, to guarantee the correct execution or administration of a deceased's estate. The sum of money always mentioned in the first part of the bond (not reproduced here) did not have to be paid unless the party to the bond fails to keep his obligation, spelled out in the second part of the bond, transcribed below. The first part of this bond was in Latin and has therefore been omitted. Note that although John Clitherow did not write his name, that does not imply that he could not read.

Margaret Clitherow of York was martyred in 1586. She was an active Catholic who was arrested upon several occasions for her religious activities and was eventually crushed to death for refusing to plead when on trial for concealing priests.

The condic[i]on of this obligac[i]on is such That if Margaret Clythero wief of ~~John~~ the abovebounden John Clythero now prison[er] in the castle of York and appoynted to remayne w[i]thin hir said husband[es] house till the sixt daye of Julye now next comyng do yeilde hirselfe prison[er] againe in the said castle of York the said sixt daye of July next, and there contynue and abyde true prisoner in state as before unles before that tyme she conforme hirselfe to godly religion now publicquely receyved w[i]thin this realme of England, And Do frome thencforth orderly and dutifullly repaire to hir p[ar]ishe church or other usuall and allowed place of common prayer and there quietly abyde and rev[er]ently heare devyne service and sermons If also in the meane season she Do not conferre nor talke w[i]th any Disobedient p[er]son or p[er]sons in matters of religion to confirme hir in that erroneous opynion she now holdeth, neyther seduce any now conformable frome there dutifullnes and obedience toward[es] religion now establisshed within this realme of England Then this obligac[i]on to be voide and of none effecte or els to stand and be in full force and vertue

John Clyderowe

Sealed and Deliv[er]ed
in our p[re]sences
ad usu[m] p[re]d[i]c[tu]m¹

Henry Proctor NP²
Rychard maltby

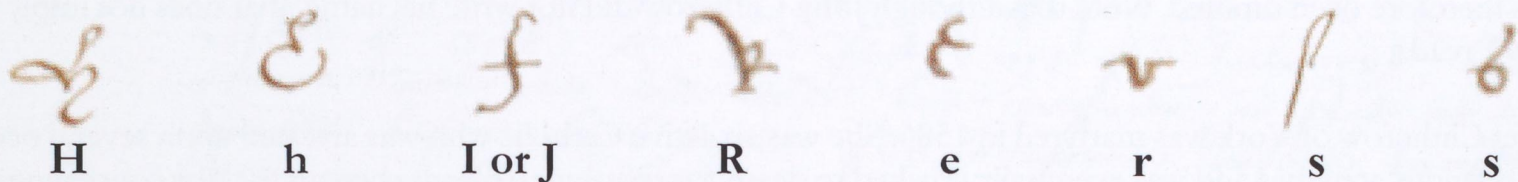
¹ to the aforesaid use

² Notary Public

MARRIAGES IN ABERFORD PARISH

PR ABE 1 fo.26

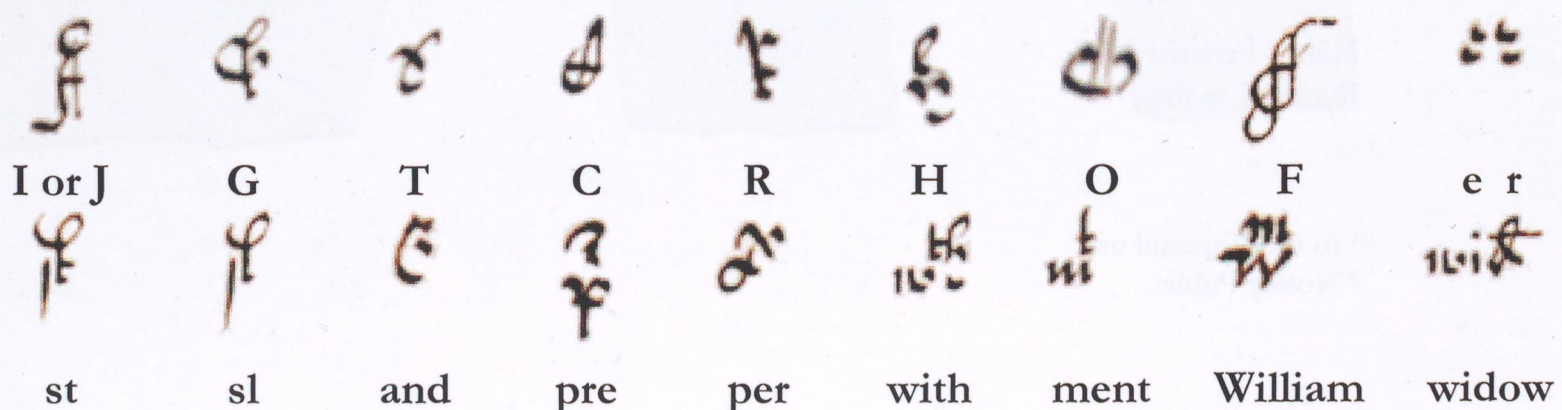
This hand is a very clear and careful one, reflecting, perhaps, the official nature of the parish register. Note that although the majority of the text is in English, Latin phrases, such as 'Nullae Nuptiae' for 'No marriages' persist as a reminder that this is a document created by the Church. Some letter forms need particular care. Notice the shape of the "h", used as both a capital — where it could be mistaken for an L — and as a lower-case letter within names such as Richard or Thomas. The capital "I" and "J" are identical — a practice left over from medieval Latin where they were not distinguished: compare for example "June" and "Isabell" in the Marriages for 1547. The capital "R", as in "Richard" should not be confused with a "K", and amongst the lower case letters "e" and "r" could be misread, and "s" appears in two forms, one commonly used at the end of words and the long "s", similar to a modern "f". This example also demonstrates the problems of faded handwriting — here on the outside edge of the page, which makes the names, which are difficult to guess from their context, hard to read.



ELIZABETH BEAUMONT'S WILL

Exchequer Court will, Doncaster Deanery, September 1644

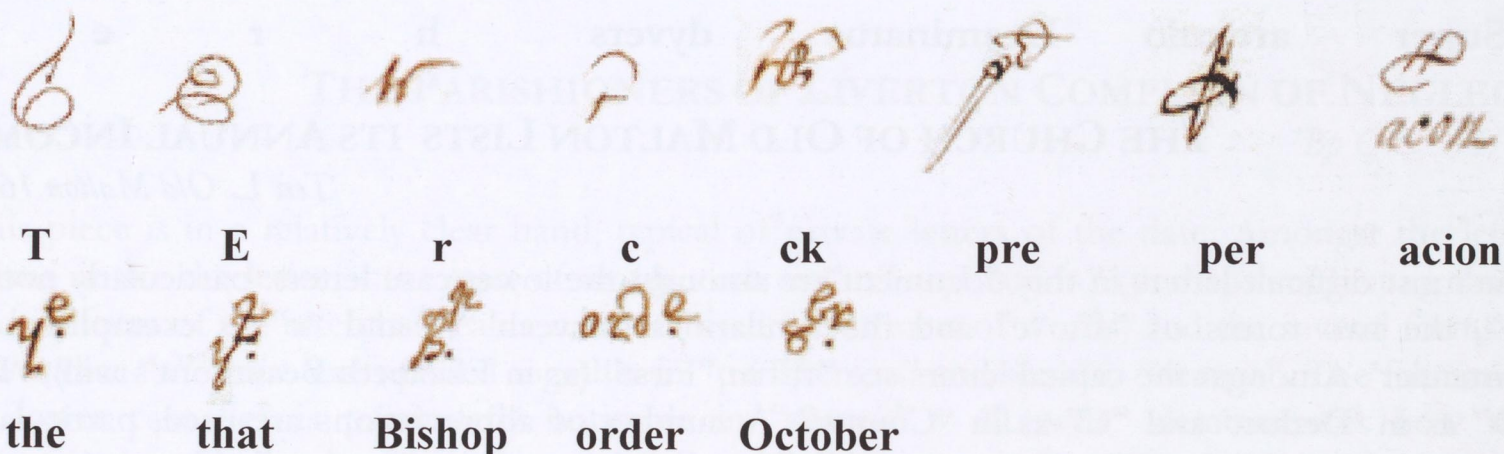
This is another example of a clear and careful hand. As in the first example, note the identical capital "I" and "J" as in "I" and "John". Other capital letters which may cause particular problems are "G", "T", "C", "R", "H" and "O". The common use of "ff" to make a capital "F" (as in "First") is exemplified here. Many of the lower case letters are similar to today's letter forms, but note "r" and "e" which can be mistaken for each other (as in "over") and particularly the "st" and "sl" ligatures which are common at this date. This will also provides examples of the use of abbreviations, many originally used in documents in medieval Latin but then adapted for use in English documents. The infills at the end of some lines are easy to mistake for abbreviations, although in fact they are used to prevent spurious additions to the document, and they should be noted. The sign for "and" is particularly common and other abbreviation signs, which will be met in numerous documents, include "pre" (as in "present") "per" or "par" (as in "performed" and "perfect") and "wth" for "with", and the typical abbreviation for "...ment" at the end of words (as in "testament"). "xpt" for Christ is also a long-standing abbreviation, based upon Greek. Names can also have particular standard abbreviations — the abbreviation used here for William is very common. Other words have just a general abbreviation sign and their missing letters must be gained from the context — see widow. The abbreviated "Item" (meaning also) is an example of the continued use of Latin — this is found particularly in documents which include lists — such as the list of bequests in a will or in an inventory. Another Latin word found in this will is the interlined "iurat" meaning he has sworn — referring to the executor's oath to administration the testator's goods honestly, and the witnesses' oaths to prove the will.



ROBERT DINMORE PERFORMS PUBLIC PENANCE

V.1698/misc papers

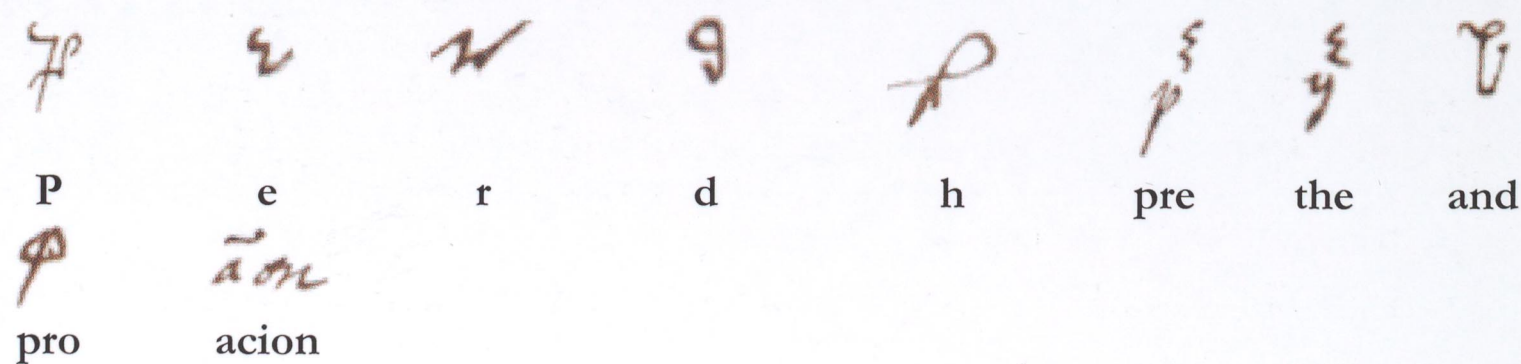
This is an interesting document, providing examples of more than one person's handwriting: that of Thomas Empson, notary public (Notarius Publicus) who has written the declaration, and that of Thomas Adam, minister of Bishopthorpe, who has added the certificate in the bottom left-hand corner. Both hands are clear. Notice the ornate capital "T" and the capital "E" of the declaration, the lower case "r" and the lower case "c" with its characteristic circumflex above the letter which is easily mistaken for an abbreviation sign. Lower case "k" can also be confusing, and note the combination "ck". Both hands make use of "=" as a hyphen, again very common. A variety of abbreviations are used in this document. As in the previous example, note the abbreviation for "per" ("performance") and "pr" for "pre" as in "presents". The abbreviation for declaration, where the i of "cion" is omitted and a line above it signifies there has been an omission, is very frequently found in words ending "cion" or "tion". Particularly important is the use of "ye" for "the". Here the "y" is a version of the Anglo-Saxon thorn, standing for "th", and so the word should always be rendered as "the" not "ye" in transcriptions. In Thomas Adam's certificate, note the use of "yt" for "that", using the same principles as "ye" above, the common abbreviation "Bp" for Bishop incorporated in the place name Bishopthorpe and the abbreviated form of "er" in "other" and "order" as well as the abbreviation sign for "and", and "8^{br}" for "October" – variations of this, such as "9^{br}" for November and "10^{br}" for "December" are frequently used. Both hands demonstrate the use of ":" to abbreviate common Christian names such as "Tho:" for Thomas and "Hen:" for Henry. Also note the use of infills at the end of lines.



THE CHURCHWARDENS AND CURATE OF SOWERBY PRESENT THE WRONG-DOERS OF THEIR CHAPELRY

YV/ChP 1677/8

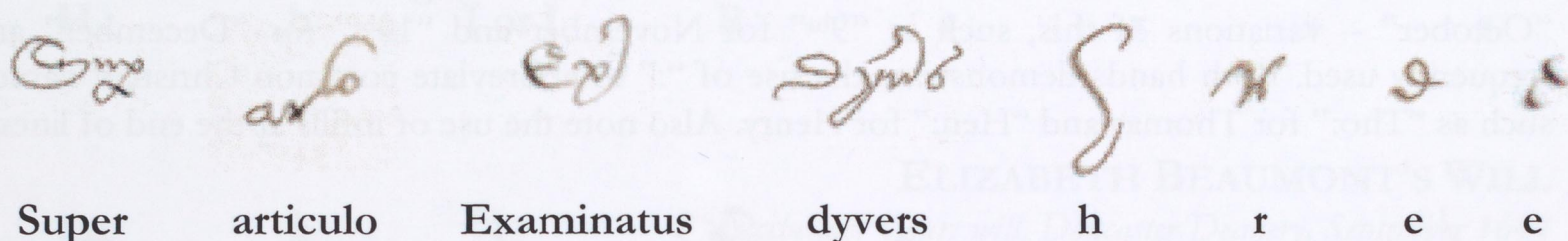
Notice particularly the capital "P" with its open top, as well as lower case "e" and "r" and "d" with its open bottom loop. Also note the letter "h" in the abbreviated signature of Christopher Bell. This document contains few abbreviations but note "pr" for "pre" in present and "ye" for "the", as well as abbreviated Christian names, and the abbreviation for "and". "Proclamacion" includes two abbreviations, that at the start for "pro" and also "acion" at the end of the word, both abbreviations being used in medieval Latin hands originally. "Item", as in Elizabeth Beaumont's will, meaning also, is used, here in conjunction with another Latin word, "Imprimis", meaning firstly, and commonly rendered "Inprimis" in documents.



AGNES MUSGRAVE'S DISTRESS OVER HER FORTHCOMING MARRIAGE

CP G609

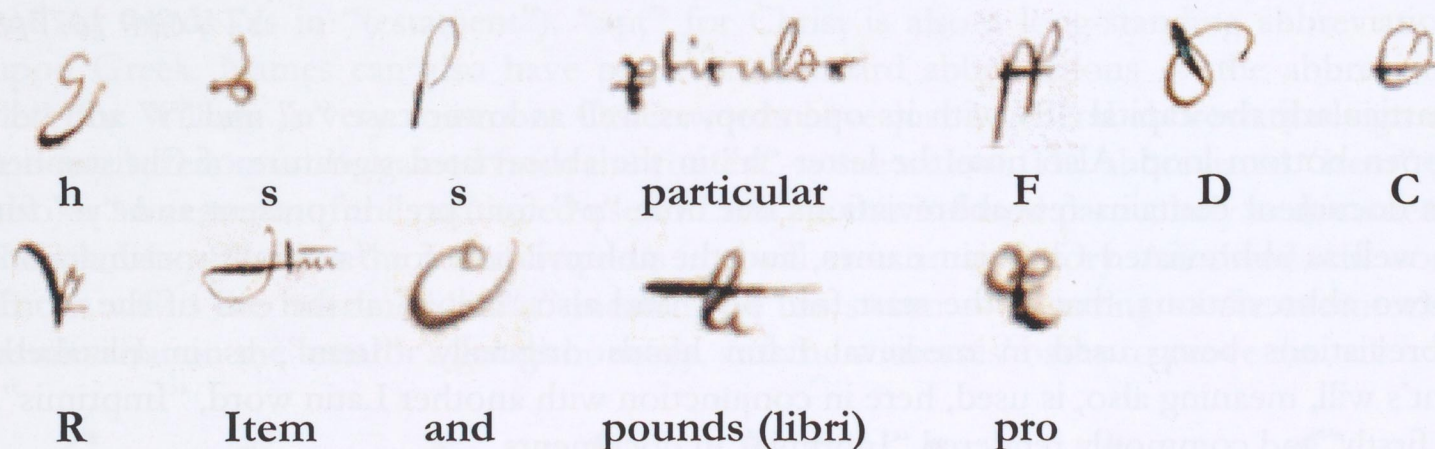
This is an example of a more hurried hand, as could be expected from a scribe taking notes on a witness's evidence. The mixture of Latin and English is a result of its position as a legal document, in a court which still produced its standard documentation principally in Latin, and the fact that it was a transcript of the witness's own evidence spoken in English. What abbreviations occur here are largely found in the Latin – see the abbreviations for “super” (over), “articulo” (article) and “examinatus” (examinant), all designed to make frequently used words quick to write, and the standard “er/re” abbreviation in “deponere”, repeated in the English “dyvers”, and the “es” abbreviation. Note particularly the lower case “h” which is frequently repeated throughout the deposition, and also the lower case “r” and the two forms of lower case “e” – often difficult letters in hands of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This document also uses abbreviation signs which are apparently unnecessary, for example above “corners” and “Curwen” – these may signify a doubling of a letter not needed for current spelling practices but their purpose is not clear. This document also provides examples of unusual spelling which can add to the transcriber's difficulties – whilst “wepe” for “weep” is not hard to decipher, “axed” for “asked” may take more imagination.



THE CHURCH OF OLD MALTON LISTS ITS ANNUAL INCOME

Ter. L. Old Malton 1611

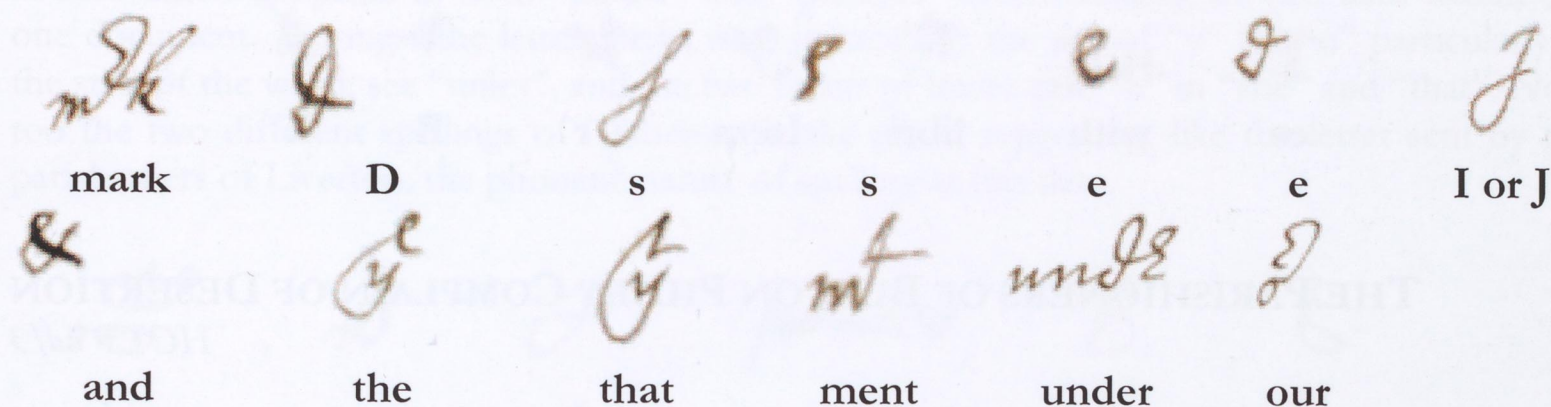
The most difficult letters in this document are amongst the lower case letters: particularly notice “h”, the two forms of “s”, “e” and the similarities between “r” and “c” as exemplified in ‘particular’. Amongst the capital letters see “ff” in “First” (as in Elizabeth Beaumont's will), “R”, “D” as in ‘Deduct’ and “C” as in “County”. A number of abbreviations are used, particularly frequent are “Itm” for “Item” (as seen in earlier examples) and the “per/par” abbreviation, this time for “par” also in “particular” as well as the abbreviation for “and”. “li” for “libri” (pounds) is also frequent. An abbreviation for “pro” appears in “profitts” and “wtch for “wich/which” is also found. “Lord”, as in Lord Archbishop is abbreviated as “L.”.



ALICE HARRISON IS NOMINATED AS A MIDWIFE

Nom.M. 1682/2

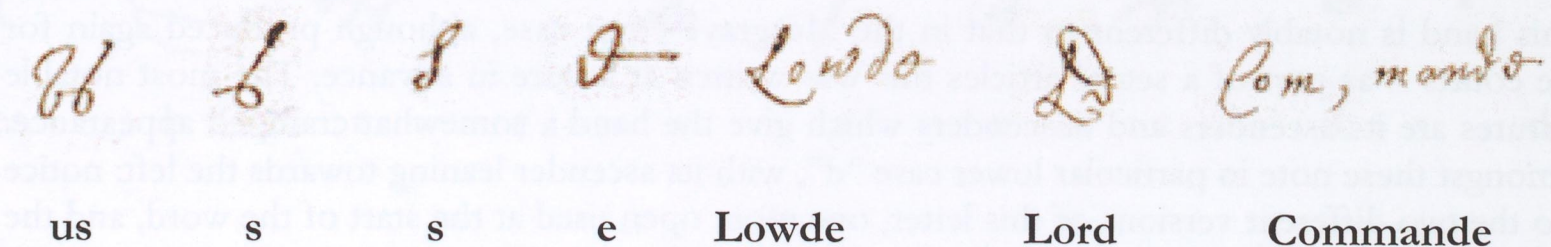
Note in particular the list of signatures to this document, the majority of them signing by mark (the word “mark” is abbreviated after each name). Amongst the letter forms notice capital “D” and both forms of lower case “s” and of lower case “e”. Capital “J” and “I” are still used interchangeably, see “Jane” and “Isabel”. Many of the abbreviations here have been met in earlier documents: the abbreviation for “and” appears more similar to the modern ampersand (&) than before, “ye” and “yt” for “the” and “that” appear as does “mt” for ment - seen here in “instrument” (seen before in Elizabeth Beaumont’s will as part of “Testament”). “Under” with its “er” abbreviation is a reminder of the declaration of penance, and a similar abbreviation appears here for “ur” in “our”.



THE PARISHIONERS OF LIVERTON COMPLAIN OF NEGLECT

Bp C & P I/13

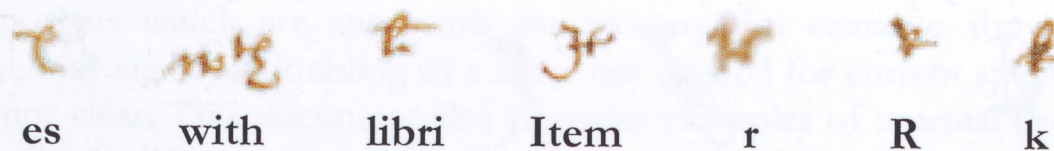
This piece is in a relatively clear hand, typical of private letters of the date. Amongst the letter forms notice the letter at the start of words such as “us” and “upon” (perhaps suggesting that a special form of the interchangeable u/v was used for the start of words) and the several forms of lower case “s” – two exemplified together in “parisheners” and see also “searvis”. The formation of lower case “e” is particularly noticable in “searvis” – “Lowde” demonstrates how this formation can lead to confusion between “e” and “o” in some cases. There are few abbreviations used in this document, only “Ld” for “Lord” and “Mr” for “Master”, perhaps reflecting the fact that the writer was not a professional scribe. The most notable points in the letter are its spelling which demonstrates the lack of standard spelling at this date since the spelling of words changes even within the document itself (see, for instance, “deivine” and “divine”) suggesting the phonetic nature of spelling. Note also the differences between modern punctuation and that used here, where commas can appear even within a word – see “Comande”.



THE LATE THOMAS ETHERINGTON'S GOODS ARE RECORDED

Precentorship wills, Jan. 1589/90

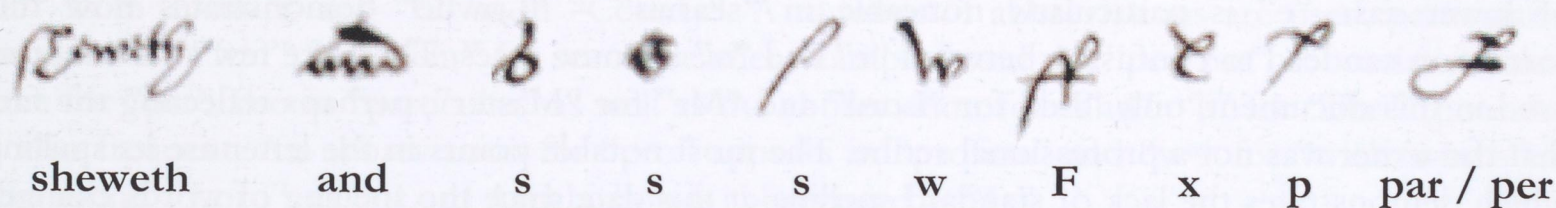
This clear sixteenth century hand makes use of both the usual set of abbreviations, such as the “es” abbreviation in “cattalles” and “instrumentes” and “wth” for “with”, and of abbreviations for money, as in “li” for “libri” (the Latin for “pounds”) as well as the usual pre-decimal “s” and “d” (actually standing for solidi and denarii, the Latin forms of shillings and pence). Here “Item” (meaning “also”) frequently found in lists, is abbreviated “It” rather than “Itm” as in other documents in this booklet. Although the hand seems so clear, the similarities between certain letters, or letters and abbreviations, could cause confusion. Other letters to take particular care with are lower case and capital “r” and lower case “k”.



THE PARISHIONERS OF BURTON PIDSEY COMPLAIN OF DESERTION

HC CP nd/3

This is a relatively clear hand with letter forms which are typical of this date – note the lower case “h”, clearer in words such as “sheweth” than later in the document on, and the ascender of “d”, leaning so far to the left in words such as “said” that it could be mistaken for an abbreviation mark. There are three forms of lower case “s”; and lower case “w”, as in “towards”, could also cause confusion with its tendency to intrude upon other letters. The use of “ff” for capital “F” is exemplified in “Flanders”. Note too the possible confusion between lower case “x”, as in “example”, and lower case “p”, as in “please”. Amongst the abbreviations note “g” for “grace” in the opening address and the “per/par” abbreviation this time for “par” in “parishners”, and the use of “:” as an abbreviation for common first names – here “Tho:” for Thomas.



ELIZABETH COWLTON COMPLAINS OF ILL-TREATMENT

HC CP 1624/3

This hand is notably different to that in the Musgrave court case, although produced again for the courts – as part of a set of articles this was written at leisure in advance. The most notable features are its ascenders and descenders which give the hand a somewhat cramped appearance. Amongst these note in particular lower case “d”, with its ascender leaning towards the left: notice too the two different versions of this letter, one more open used at the start of the word, and the other in the middle or end of words – see “doth” and “said”. Other letters to particularly note are lower case “h”, found in two slightly differing forms (see “she” and “nether”), lower case “c” with the accent above it, very common at this date, the two forms of lower case “s” and capital “C”. Abbreviations are common within this piece. The repeated phrase ‘Item she doth propound and article’ which starts each new numbered article includes the abbreviation “Itm” for “item” (also) seen elsewhere in this booklet, the “pro” abbreviation in “propound” and “arle” for “article”. “With” either alone or in “within” is regularly abbreviated, but interestingly “and”, a frequently abbreviated word in other documents, is not. Also note particularly the “per” abbreviation in “perell”, easily mistaken for an additional loop to the letter rather than the standard “per” abbreviation with a line through the descender of the “p”.

d h h c s s C pro articulate per

JOHN CLITHEROW IS BOUND FOR HIS WIFE'S GOOD BEHAVIOUR

HC BOND 101

This document is in a clear secretary hand. It makes little use of abbreviations. The "cion" abbreviation is repeated several times: in "condicion" and "obligacion" whilst the word "prisoner" contains a clear example of the "er/re" abbreviation sign and the "per/par" abbreviation appears in both "parish" and "persons" demonstrating its two uses within the one document. Amongst the letter forms note particularly the use of "v" for "u" particularly at the start of the word, see "unles", and the two forms of lower case "h" in "she" and "that". Note too the two different spellings of Clitherow in the piece, suggesting, like the letter sent by the parishioners of Liverton, the phonetic nature of spelling at this date.

cion ner per / par unles h h

JOHN CLITHEROW IS FINED FOR HIS WIFE'S BEHAVIOUR

HC AB 9 fo.165

The mixture of English and Latin in this court book entry is typical of the High Commission act books of this date, but increases the problems of transcription. The difficulty of the handwriting can be accounted for by the nature of the document: in the High Commission court both the heading and contents for each case were written down with speed at the time of the hearing. This causes both the classic secretary hand problem of descenders interfering with words in the line below and the added confusion caused by errors and erasures. The majority of the abbreviations come within the Latin but notice the use of the "es" abbreviation in "bondes" and "afterwardes". In addition to letters such as lower case "h" which frequently cause confusion in these hands, a number of letters appear in more than one form. See lower case "r" in "contra" and "Margaretam"; lower case "s" in "this", "is" and "husband", lower case "c" in "church" and "contra" and "d" at the end of "husband" and the start of "deinde".

es h r r s s c c d d

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The history of the United States of America is a story of growth and development. It begins with the first settlers who came to the continent in search of a new home. They found a land of vast resources and opportunities, but also one of many challenges. The early years were marked by conflict and struggle, as the settlers fought to establish a new society. Over time, the United States grew from a small colony into a powerful nation. It became a land of freedom and opportunity, where people could live and work as they saw fit. The United States has played a major role in the world, and its influence is felt today.

THE FOUNDING OF THE UNITED STATES

The United States was founded on the principles of liberty and justice for all. The Founding Fathers, who were men of vision and courage, created a new nation that would stand as a beacon of hope for people everywhere. They wrote the Constitution, which is the foundation of our government. The Constitution guarantees the rights of all citizens, and it ensures that the government is accountable to the people. The United States has a long history of fighting for freedom and justice, and it continues to do so today. We must always remember the words of the Founding Fathers: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

THE GROWTH OF THE UNITED STATES

The United States has grown from a small colony into a powerful nation. It has expanded its territory, and it has become a leader in many fields. The United States has a rich cultural heritage, and it has made many contributions to the world. We have a diverse population, and we have a long history of innovation and achievement. The United States is a land of opportunity, where people can live and work as they see fit. We must always remember the words of the Founding Fathers: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."